The Sketch

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THREE LITTLE DUTCH GIRLS.

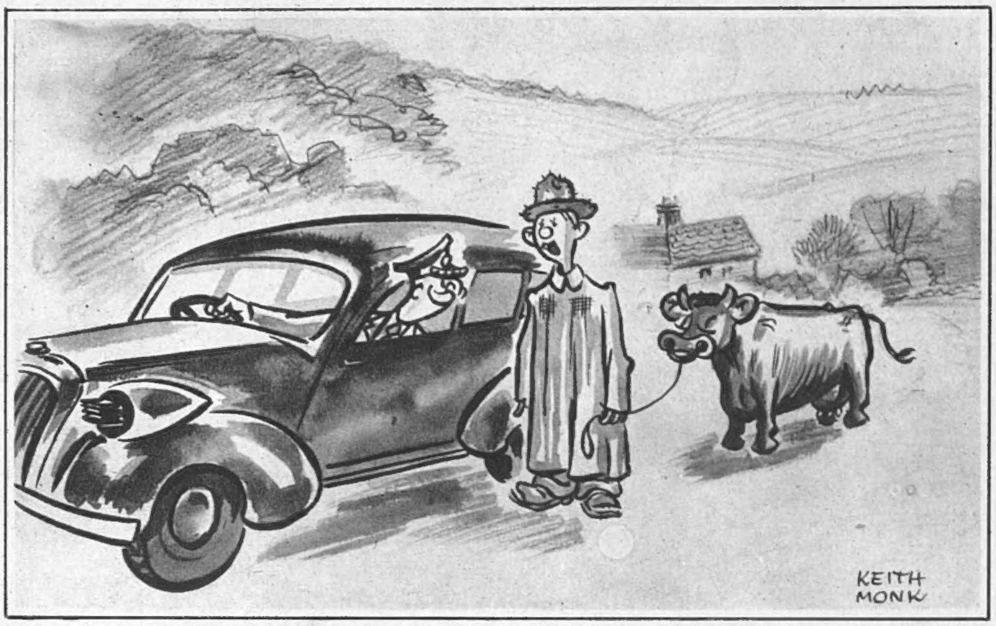
These little Dutch girls are Princesses of the House of Orange, daughters of H.R.H. Princess Juliana of the Netherlands and Prince Bernhard, and grand-daughters of Queen Wilhelmina. They are (l. to r.) baby PRINCESS MARGRIET FRANCISCA, *born in Ottawa in January 1943;* PRINCESS IRENE EMMA ELIZABETH, *born in August 1939; and* PRINCESS BEATRIX WILHELMINA ARMGARD, *born on January 31, 1938. Our Karsh portrait study was taken in Ottawa, where Princess Juliana and her children have been living for some time.* [PHOTOGRAPH BY KARSH OF OTTAWA.]

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

All Flesh is Grass.

The corn is green, but that does not interest me; far more important to me is the fact that the grass is green. That, no doubt, is what it ought to be; but it is also long, and growing longer every day—nay, every moment. With the aid of a little imagination, you can see it stretching up like one of those slow-motion botanical films; and with every millimetre that it grows, it adopts a more impudent air of "Yah! What about it?" My situation in this matter is truly heart-rending, and only shows what trouble we lay up for ourselves when we make our lives abjectly dependent on machines. I have a motor-mower, but I have no petrol for it, and even if I had, I doubt whether I could get a splutter out of its decrepit vitals. I have an elegant hand-mower with a box and a little roller on it; but it seems to prefer excavation to tonsure, and every yard I push it is blood, sweat and tears—and, I fear, language. Finally, I have a nice light, semi-detached-villa mower, which would be just about my mark; but its blades are as blunt as our ancestral carving-knife, and can I get any craftsman to set them? Or can I? Or can I set them myself? Or can't I?



"The Army camp, Sir? About two miles down the road . . . camouflaged—you can't miss it!" (DRAWN BY KEITH MONK.)

All We Don't Like Sheep.

And so I am reduced to ignominious inertia, frustrated and betrayed by machines. And this suggests to me one of the minor historical mysteries—how did human beings cut grass before mowers were invented? Did armies of menials go around clipping everything by hand? Or did landed proprietors wander about chewing their own grass, like King Nebuchadnezzar? It is always on really interesting points like this that history lets you down. Now, don't tell me that it was all done by sheep and that what I need to relieve my anguish is a flock of sheep. Sheep are all right in a rural setting, or at the butcher's, or even on a golf course, where they make interesting hazards (a niblick putt over a sheep-stymie is one of the neatest shots I know); but sheep are not all right on my lawns and borders. So you'll oblige me by dismissing sheep from your mind, unless you are one of those eccentric persons who cannot go to sleep without counting them.

Won on a Fowl.

Other Job's Comforters say hens. It is freely admitted that they won't keep much grass down, but they might account for a little of it, and I should get the added advantage (it is alleged) of abundant new-laid eggs. Unfortunately, I hate hens—I don't know why, unless it is a childhood complex through being pecked by a pullet in my bassinet (the well-known Gallinaceous Psychosis); anyhow, Dame Partlet and I are "just two girls who have nothing in common," as a famous tennis-star once said of another famous tennis-star. But I am bound to say that my respect for hens has recently gone up more than somewhat. They have acquired a certain juristic status which I confess I never expected of them. Two men fell foul over a couple of hens—oh, dear, dear, dear! That *did* slip out, didn't it?—I mean that one man accused another of stealing two of his hens. They agreed that they would let the birds decide the issue by choosing their own hen-houses in the presence of the police. One pullet immediately flapped off to the accuser's hennery, and the accused, true to his word, pleaded guilty to that one and was dealt with accordingly. Perilous, you may say, to have one's fate decided by a hen, but perhaps not more perilous than having it decided by a jury.

"If it tastes sweet—it's tea; if it's salt—it's stew; and if it tastes soapy—it's dish-water." (DRAWN BY BRETTELL.)

Good and Hard.

However, I will not be diverted by poultry from harping on my grievance. I repeat, there is apparently no instrument known to science

with which I can set my lawn-mower quietly, or even noisily, at home. And yet look at the other things they are doing! I read that the Ford Willow Run works are now turning out one four-engined bomber *per hour*. But I don't want a four-engined bomber: I only want a no-engined lawn-mower which will mow. Then again, I learn that by a simple chemical process wood can now be made as hard as steel. You just soak it in something and it comes out like a bit of reinforced concrete. That is just grand, I suppose, though it occurs to me that softness in wood, as in human beings, is often a more useful quality than hardness. But now let them turn their attention to something else. Let them make window-glass as tough as steel, so that it won't crack and splinter on the slightest provocation. This frangibility of glass has always been a great nuisance, and a great reproach to science, in my opinion.

Stop Your Tickling, Jock!

But I set against this oversight one great advance recently made—a real contribution to human happiness. I dare say it has never been your lot to wear a hair-shirt, for this, though uncouponed, is a comparatively rare form of apparel nowadays. But if you happen to be constituted, as to the epidermis, as I have the misfortune to be, you may have suffered all the torments of the hair-shirt through certain garments described as "pure wool." I will not dwell upon all the horrors of that experience, but you need fear it no more. These scientific Back Room Boys are certainly ingenious fellows, and by a very remarkable combination of poison gas, the juice of tropical fruits and the habits of the common moth grub, with a judicious admixture of enzymes and sodium bisulphite—but you probably would not follow me if I went into all the technical details; suffice it to say that they have taken the tickle out of wool. This is undoubtedly a milestone on the road of progress, and the men who have achieved it should certainly be buried in the Abbey—though not yet, of course; not for a long time yet, I trust.

A Wandering Minstrel! This chlorinated, tropical, enzymic wool ought to have been discovered long ago, before certain loving hands (to which I am unaffectedly grateful) began their crazy-work on some of my garments. It is not my habit—nor, I trust, yours—to discuss my underclothing in public. In these days of great world events there are other subjects more fitting to engage our attention; and, in any case, I never claimed to be a Pin-up Boy. Nevertheless, when I look at some of my more venerable *dessous*, I am filled with admiration both for the industry and the ingenuity which have been lavished upon them. "Never say die" has been the watchword, not if surgery can save the patient. Some of my friends wear their patches outside; one of them has resurrected, dyed and darned a "British Warm," of the last war, and it is beginning to resemble a crazy-work quilt. The Wandering Minstrel's shreds and patches also ran. I cannot go as far as this—pride, obstinacy or vanity forbids; but the only result is that I am a whited sepulchre. The outside may be unpatched, but within — well, it only shows, Dr. Goebbels, to what straits you and your pals have reduced us, so pass the glad tidings on to Mr. William Joyce.

"She says it's only a *utility* engagement."

DRAWN BY BEAUCHAMP.

Dream or Nightmare?

Inventiveness is running to less innocuous things than thornless wool; we are hearing a lot about the "dream car" of the future. I have a picture of it before me. At first I thought it was a microscopic enlargement of a wood-louse; then, on closer inspection, I took it to be a new streamlined, functional type of *entrée* dish. But no, it claims to be an automobile, with a dash of yacht or gondola about it. A hundred miles an hour is its cruising speed, and to blazes with the pedestrians; it is full of radios and television (doubtless to improve the "care and attention" of the driver) and air-conditioning gadgets; the only things lacking seem to be a soda-fountain and a grand piano. On reaching a river it sails in and converts itself into a pleasure craft; but a grave omission in the specification is that it does not, at the turn of a switch, spread its wings and fly. This shows lack of imagination, somewhere, surely? Well, if this is the dream car, I propose to remain awake, and I shall be quite content if I can ever obtain batteries and tyres and a gallon or two of petrol to get my own mediæval museum-piece started again.

[Continued overleaf

Continued.]

Helots of the Home.

Once more I must take up the cause of woman, as my natural chivalry always prompts me to do. No, I am not going to talk about Equal Pay; this is not the House of Commons, and anyhow I don't want to get into trouble with Mr. Churchill. I am much more concerned about this question of overworked mothers. I know some of them who are so grossly overworked that I should not blame them if they risked five years' penal servitude by organising a strike of mothers (I wonder if I am myself sticking my neck out for five years by saying that ?). And when they are called up to account for their "war work" to some crimson-nailed, henna-haired, eyebrowless Giggle Girl ("indispensable," of course) I wonder they don't increase it to ten years for justifiable homicide. Mothers of the World, Unite! Go and have a heart-to-heart talk to Mr. Bevin, and before you know where you are, you 'll have him sobbing. He has a kind heart under that stern exterior. And while you are about it, be fair and put in a word for overworked fathers. There are quite a lot of them, you know.

Squire: "Who 's that impertinent scoundrel? He addressed me as 'old cock-sparrow'!"
Yokel: "That be the new manager at the butcher's."
Squire: "Indeed! Then I wish I had returned his friendly salutation."
DRAWN BY WELLAND.

Monarchy Overthrown.

Too many concessions, in my opinion, are being made to mere prejudice. For instance, I see with concern that Weymouth, which I always took to be a quiet, dignified sort of place, has decided that it has no further use for a statue of George III. I should not describe myself as a wholehearted admirer of that monarch, and, if it had rested with me, I should not have been enthusiastic about putting up a statue to him. But when I look round London, I find a great many persons whose statues I would rather pull down. Indeed, if stone statues could be put to as useful a purpose as iron railings, I should be in favour of a pogrom of statues; but I confess I do not know what one would do with several hundred tons of sculptured masonry. So, on the whole, I should let sleeping statues stand; and I am very much afraid that this anti-Georgian movement is a concession to our American visitors, who have never, I fear, regarded George III. with pride and affection. I would remind them, however, that we have a statue of George Washington in Trafalgar Square, so that I think we might reasonably cry quits, and no hard feelings.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the rations are served." (DRAWN BY MACDONALD.)

Massacre of the Innocents.

Now, a very proper concession which we *might* make to the United States forces, if we were wise, would be to have a renascence of ice-cream. Millions, especially of the young, have been hoping that Colonel Llewellin's heart would develop the melting qualities of the Snow Fruit and the Eskimo Pie, but up to the present it remains adamant. Yes, I know there is a war on and that we cannot have luxuries, but I do not regard ice-cream as a luxury; it is essential to the morale of the young, and I am sure that if there were more ice-cream, there would not be so many of these juvenile delinquents. Of course, I should not be averse from a lick of strawberry or vanilla myself, but it has been a lifelong principle with me to think of others rather than myself, and I do beg Colonel Llewellin to reflect gravely before going down to history as Herod II.

"In any case, it 's doubtful if the average Jerry would know a Simone Martini from an Antonelli da Messina!" (DRAWN BY SILENUS.)

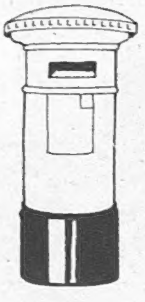
The eighty-eighth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

"WELL, BIG BOY, NOW YOU'VE CALLED ME HONEY, SWEETIE PIE, CREAM PUFF, LAMBIE PIE, SUGAR BUN AND COOKIE, LET'S HAVE A PIECE OF DRY TOAST!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—Spring has come, and the chestnut-tree outside Doctor Rival's house has burst into leaf in that sudden, spectacular way which always used to delight you. If only one could enjoy it; but of course nobody can enjoy anything just now.

"The stupidity and futility of war!" shouted Lady B. suddenly, when we were admiring the daffodils under the trees in Faith's garden after Church on Sunday.

"It's no good raging," said the Conductor. "That way madness lies. All we can do is to hang on to the sane and lovely things which are left to us," and he tiptoed across the lawn to look at Little No-well in her pram.

"I always meant to have a Second Blooming when the Linnet and Bill were settled," I said, for everybody was looking unhappy, and Lady B. had tears in her eyes, "and now all I can think of is a Second Front."

"What do you mean—Second Blooming?" said Faith, deeply interested.

"Well, I meant to buy some nice clothes and take a small flat in London, and get to know Interesting People."

"Perhaps Interesting People wouldn't want to know you," said Mrs. Savernack.

"It sounds an excellent arrangement to me," said Charles, with almost too much enthusiasm.

"*I* meant to have a Second Blooming when I stopped feeding Little No-well," said Faith sadly, and the Conductor drew his head out from under the hood of Little No-well's pram with an anxious expression on his face.

"What sort of Second Blooming, Faith," said Lady B., who enjoys this sort of talk and was now quite cheerful again.

"Oh, lots of things," said Faith, "if the war had been over. I've got masses of clothes which none of you have ever seen, and I thought we'd have parties, and I'd ask some people to stay. Dan, for instance, and Teddy Midas."

"To look at Little No-well in her pram."

Midas is not his real name, of course. It is just what we call him because he is so rich and grand and influential.

"You can't have Dan, because he's away in his submarine," said the Admiral. "But I don't see why you shouldn't wear some of your undisclosed wardrobe, Faith, and give us all a treat."

"And ask Teddy Midas to stay, and give us all another treat," said Lady B., who thinks the sooner the Conductor gets used to Faith's men friends the better.

"You can't do that," said the Conductor smugly, "because of the ban on the coast."

But Faith did give her party, and Midas did come. Everybody brought food and drink, and Faith looked quite lovely in cyclamen pink. Midas laughed when we asked him how he had evaded the ban. "He is so rich and grand," we said to each other, "he doesn't have to keep rules like the rest of us." Lady B. was just saying that it was the best party she'd been to for years, and it almost made you forget the War, when there was a loud knocking on the front door.

"'Please!' said Faith."

"Black-out!" said the Conductor, and bolted from the room.

He came back with our Policeman. A sudden silence fell on the room, and the Policeman walked straight up to Midas. "Pardon me, Zur," he said, "but can I see your identity card?"

Smiling, Midas took a leather case out of his pocket and handed it to the Policeman. "Have you a special permit to be in this area?" said the Policeman when he had looked at it.

Faith put her hand on the Policeman's arm and pulled him into a corner. "I don't think you know who this gentleman is," she said in a low voice. Then she stood on tiptoe and whispered in his ear. The Policeman remained unmoved. "Please!" said Faith, and she looked up under her eyelashes and smiled at him. The Policeman drew a deep breath and closed his eyes for a moment.

But Midas had to go, and on the last bus, too. The Conductor says our police are wonderful.

I am hurrying to get this letter to you finished because, at the end of the week, I have got to go into a Nursing Home and have my arm tweaked, and I shall then be too sorry for myself to pen a line to anybody.

The worst of going with Charles to see a Doctor is that the Doctor is always more interested in Charles than he is in me. Once, a long time ago, when Charles used to have time to go about with me, he came with me when I had to have a tooth stopped, and the Dentist placed the drill firmly on a nerve in my tooth and then looked over the top of my head and began telling Charles a funny story about a mutual patient.

When Charles and I were ushered into the presence of the Great Bone Chief, he and Charles immediately began talking about the Beveridge Report. I sat by the fire and warmed my hands, and began to hope we might get out without my arm being looked at at all, but after a time the Great Bone Chief caught sight of me and said: "Ah, yes; of course. Take off your jersey, please, and sit here."

I took off my jersey, dislodging my two hairpins, Castor and Pollux, in the process, and sat there.

"If one were perfectly sure the general public would really benefit, it would be simple," said the Great Bone Chief. "This arm has only got sixty degrees, Charles. I'd feel happier myself if I thought we'd get the thing working gradually."

"If we rush it there'll be a muddle."

"All these meetings—not much rotation here—they don't really get us anywhere."

"Ow!" I said.

"Of course, nobody has the slightest idea what conditions will be like after the war."

"Doctors have got enough to do just now, God knows, without going to meetings. I think this needs a bit of help. Shall I come to you?"

"No, no, Old Man, you're too busy. She can come in here for the night."

At the word "she" I pricked up my ears, for I felt sure they must be talking about me. "I'd like to go to the Linnet's Hospital," I said.

This remark was ignored, and the Great Bone Chief went to the telephone and booked me a bed in a Nursing Home.

Outside, in the street, I said: "But Charles, I *wanted* to go to the Linnet's Hospital."

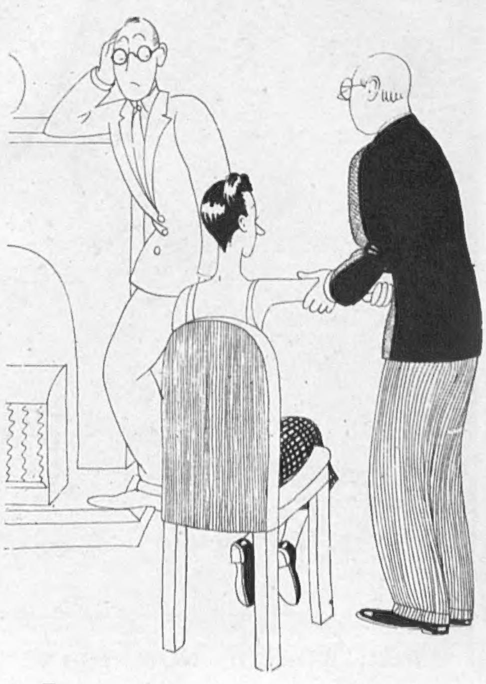
"If it's more convenient for him in the Nursing Home you must go there," said Charles. "Remember, he's a Very Busy Man, and he's Doing You For Nothing Because You Are A Doctor's Wife."

"Sometimes I wish I wasn't," I said sadly.

"Weren't," said Charles.

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend,

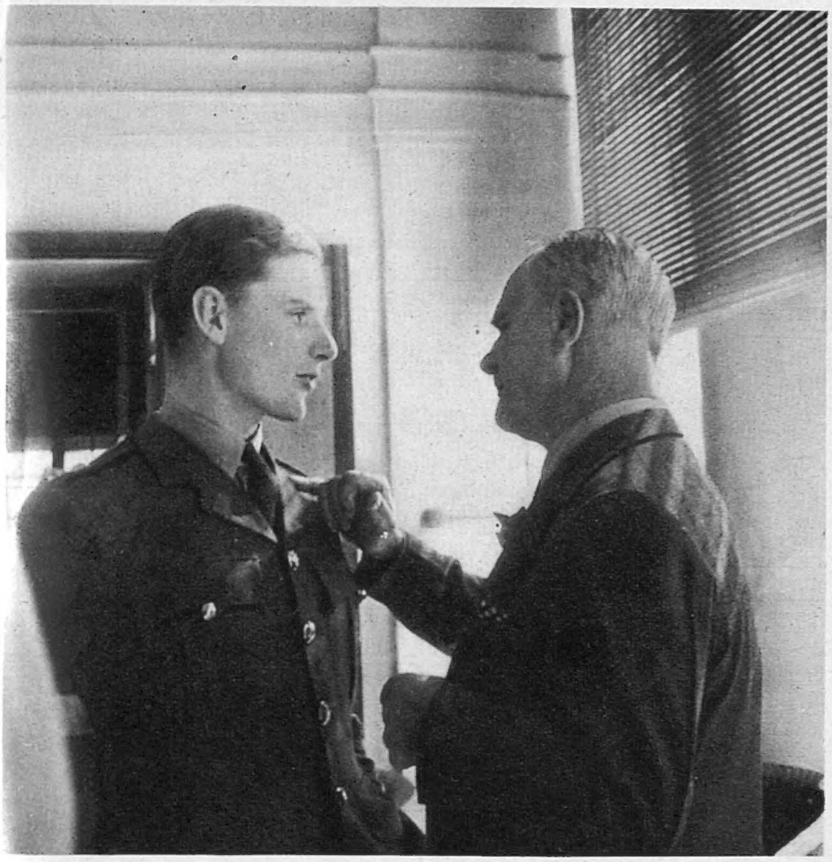
HENRIETTA.



"'Doctors have got enough to do just now, God knows!'"

AT THE VICEROY'S LEAVE CAMP FOR JUNIOR OFFICERS FROM THE BURMA FRONT.

THE HON. FELICITY WAVELL, *second daughter of the Viceroy, drinks a cocktail with* PILOT OFFICER WALKER, R.A.F., *and* CAPTAIN MacNAB, *of the Camerons.*



H.E. THE VICEROY *wants to know what badge* LIEUT. PETER LANGTON-SMITH *is wearing.*

SOON after arriving in India, Lord Wavell opened one of the Staff Houses on the Viceregal estate as a leave camp for junior officers. In the past it had housed military secretaries to former viceroys, and was occupied in 1941 by Generalissimo and Mme. Chiang Kai-shek when they paid their State visit to India. Twenty-two officers can be accommodated in the leave camp, preference being given to those who manage to make the long journey to Delhi from the forward areas—Assam and Chittagong. On Christmas Day, the Viceroy and Lady Wavell visited the camp, had a drink before lunch with the officers, and wished them a happy Christmas. Officers on leave here use the Viceregal tennis courts, squash courts, and swimming-pool, and they are asked to parties at the Viceroy's house, where they have an opportunity of meeting prominent British and Indian personalities. Any overflow from the leave-camp house sleep in Lord Wavell's touring tents, set up in the garden.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CECIL BEATON, BRITISH OFFICIAL.

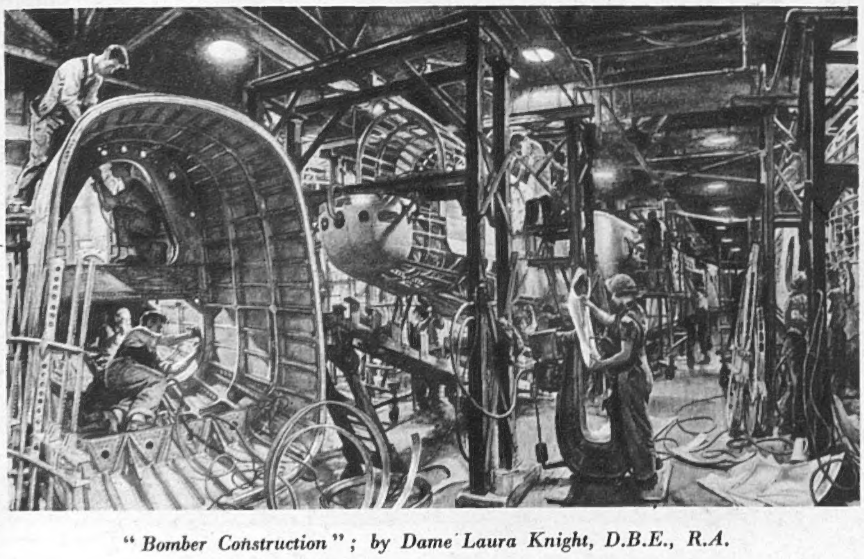
LORD WAVELL, *visiting the leave camp, talks to junior officers back from the Burma front.*

LADY WAVELL, *who takes a great interest in her husband's venture, takes a cocktail with the officers.*

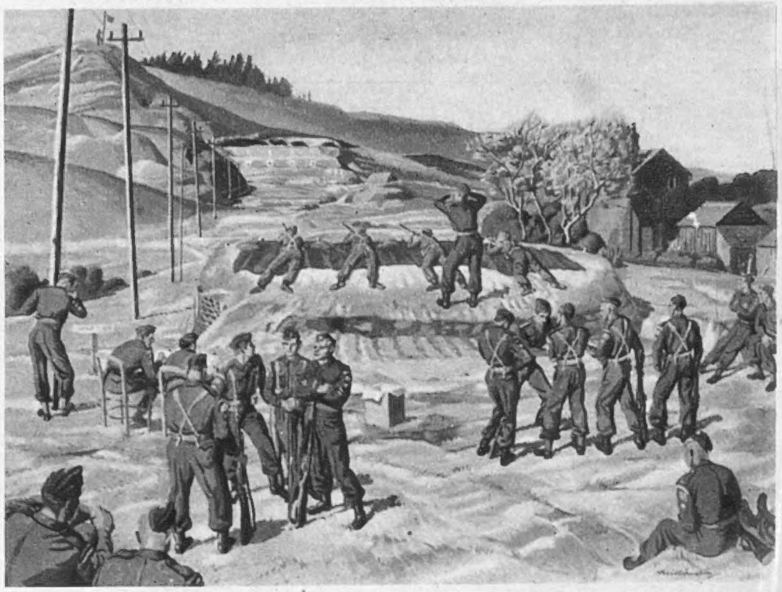
WAR, PEACE AND SPORT AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

"Pam in Worcestershire"; by Harold Williamson.

"Mrs. Christopher Dawnay and Rupert"; by William Dring, A.R.A.

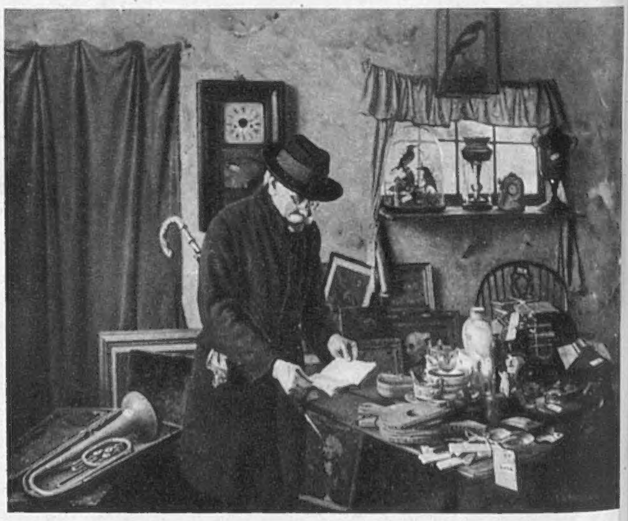


"Bomber Construction"; by Dame Laura Knight, D.B.E., R.A.



"Home Guard, Sunday Morning"; by Harold Williamson.

"The Pytchley Kennel Hounds Feeding"; by A. J. Munnings, P.R.A., R.W.S.

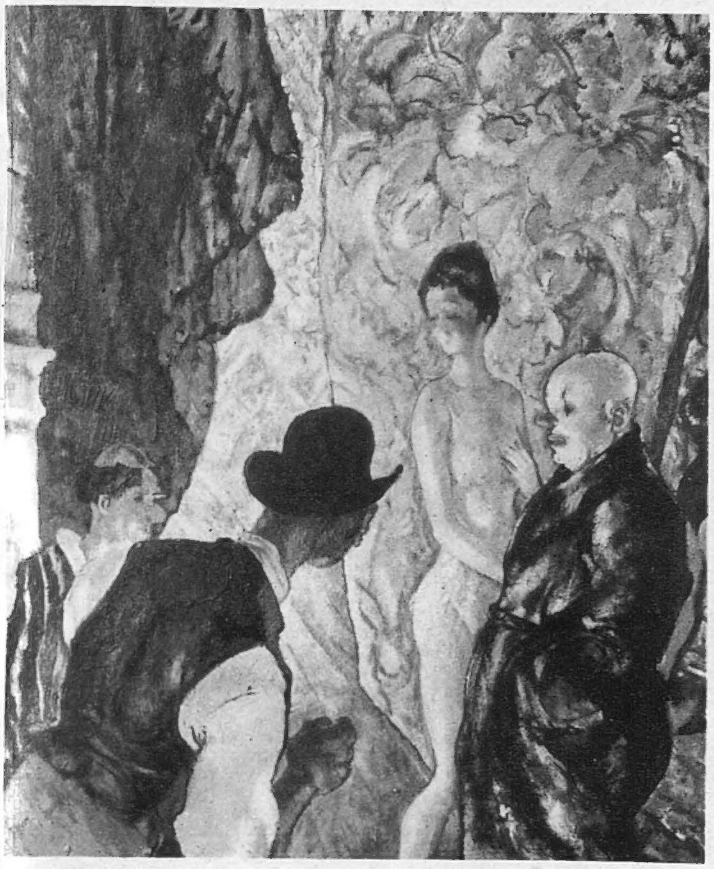


"A Queer Lot"; by Charles Spencelayh.

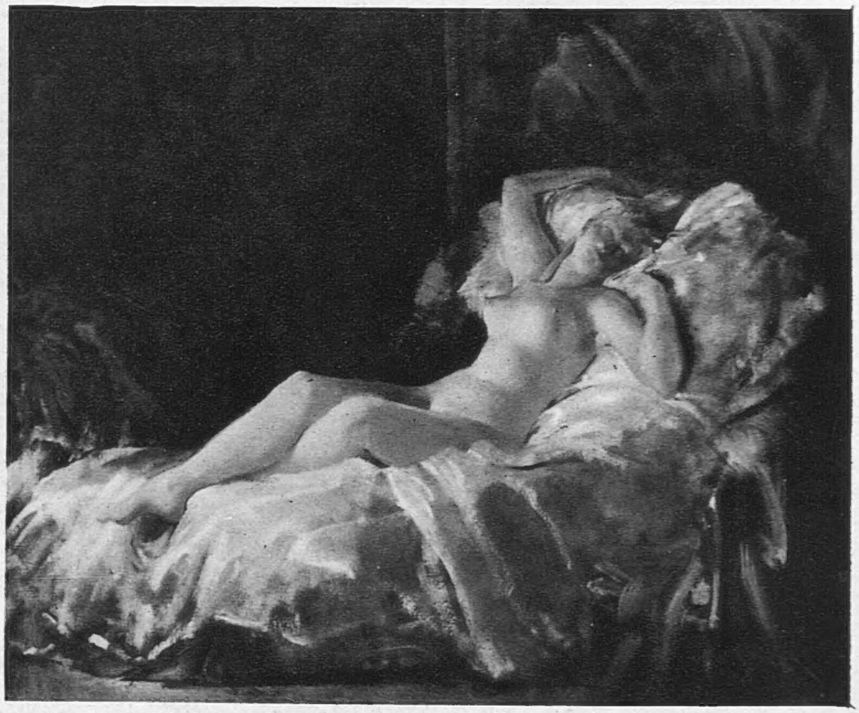
THE 176th exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, was due to hold its Private View on Friday last, April 28, and to open to the public on Saturday, April 29. On this page we give reproductions of one of the works exhibited by A. J. Munnings, the newly-elected President; of a portrait by William Dring, a newly-elected A.R.A.; a picture by Dame Laura Knight, the distinguished woman R.A.; as well as paintings by Harold Williamson, and a characteristic work by Charles Spencelayh.

FROM THE PICTURES BY A. J. MUNNINGS, P.R.A., DAME LAURA KNIGHT, R.A., WILLIAM DRING, A.R.A., HAROLD WILLIAMSON AND CHARLES SPENCELAYH. COPYRIGHTS RESERVED FOR THE ARTISTS OR OWNERS BY "THE ROYAL ACADEMY ILLUSTRATED."

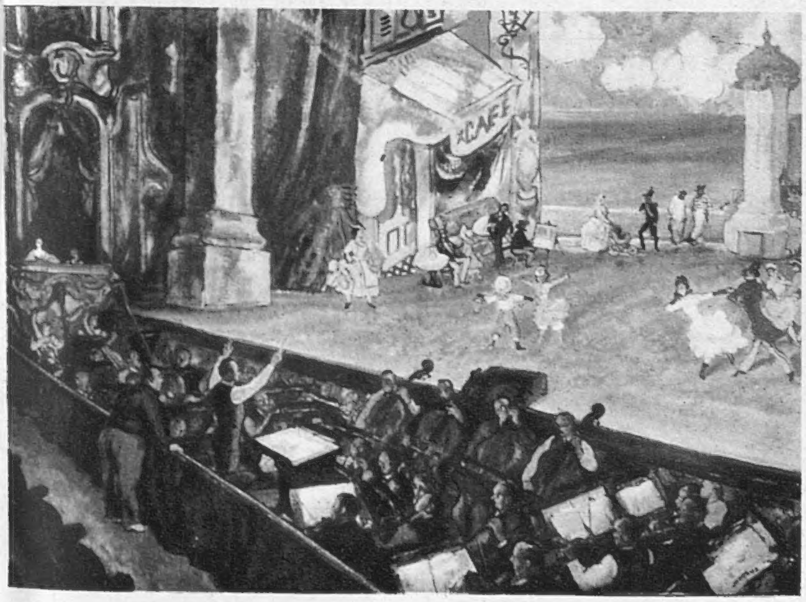
THE ROYAL ACADEMY: A PORTRAIT, AND SUBJECT PICTURES.



"Back Stage"; by Steven Spurrier, A.R.A., R.B.A.



"Helen"; by A. K. Lawrence, R.A.



"Ballet Rehearsal"; by Steven Spurrier, A.R.A., R.B.A.

"Pauline in the Yellow Dress"; by James Gunn.

THIS year's Royal Academy, as usual, contains a number of important portraits. James Gunn's "Pauline in the Yellow Dress" is an extremely attractive picture. Steven Spurrier, who was made an A.R.A. last year, is represented by several delightful subject pictures, two of which are reproduced on this page.

FROM THE PICTURES BY STEVEN SPURRIER, A.R.A., A. K. LAWRENCE, R.A., AND JAMES GUNN.

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CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

SOME months ago an exhibitor friend of mine, who runs a small repertory cinema in North London, asked me whether I would canvass my readers as to the films they would like to see again—or, more specifically, what films they would take some trouble and spend some money to go and see again. I did, and out of sixty or seventy titles mentioned, these are the films, in this order, that came home with a runaway victory :—

"Un Carnet de Bal."
"Citizen Kane."
"Mr. Deeds Goes to Town."
"The Good Earth."
"Pygmalion."
"Kermesse Heroïque."

"Un Carnet de Bal" has recently been revived in the West End, and now "PYGMALION" turns up again at the Leicester Square. It is my earnest advice to you to go and see it. I would not say that the film has aged in the six years since it was first shown. I would rather say that it seems to have matured. It may be, of course, by contrast with the normal war diet in the cinemas, it may even be that we have grown up a little with the experiences we have been through, but the wit of the Shaw work seems saltier to-day, the flavour richer, the acting more full-bodied.

It is a long, long time since I came away from a film comedy feeling so satisfied and refreshed. It is a long time since I laughed so much in the cinema. I laughed at the tea-party scene until the tears ran down my cheeks.

What a gift Shaw's lines are to an actor! And what a cast was assembled here to deliver them! "Pygmalion," as you 'll no doubt remember, was the film "Introducing Wendy Hiller." The impact of Miss Hiller's Eliza Doolittle is as startling to-day as it was six years ago. True, that round young face, with its good bones and wide mouth, is comparatively familiar to modern audiences—although not yet as familiar, I fancy, as it ought to be — but the subdued, smouldering performance, with its sudden blazes of passion, still has the power to astonish and captivate us.

It is good to hear Leslie Howard's beautiful voice again, and to watch his leisured, diffident, but always authoritative trajectory across a screen. The sense of loss is sharpened, but the memory, at least, is refreshed. And what expert talent the film employed for even the smaller parts! Jean Cadell as Professor Higgins' housekeeper, Marie Löhr as his mother, Scott Sunderland as the pukka Pickering, Violet Vanbrugh as the unnamed Ambassadress, Stephen Murray as a Policeman glimpsed for a couple of seconds—this is indeed casting for quality.

I have only one fault to find with this fine picture, apart from a slight tendency to repetitiousness in the final sequences. I simply can't believe in Wilfrid Lawson's ponderous dustman, Doolittle. I never did believe in it, and I never shall believe in it. It seems to me over-acted, over-stylised, and muddled in its idiom. This much, however, I must add in all fairness to Mr. Lawson. I never could believe in Mr. Shaw's dustman in the first place.

Students of wartime psychology may like to observe that there is a new trend going on just now in film-making—a trend towards spiritism in its various aspects. For years it had been quite a job to get anyone to look at a ghostly piece, unless it were embellished with shrieks in the night, a comic negro servant, and if possible, Bob Hope; but to-day the serious manifestations of ghostcraft are coming thick and fast. The story-teller in "The Human Comedy" was a ghost. A ghost father toned up Don Ameche's morale in "Happy Land." "The Uninvited" was all about a couple of ghosts, one who smelt of mimosa, and another who blew about the house as a cold draught. "Halfway House" presented our own Mervyn and Glynis Johns as a ghostly publican and his daughter, who received a select clientèle at their ghostly, half-timbered inn in a Welsh valley. We are shortly going to see "The Canterville Ghost," and J. B. Priestley's "They Came to a City," which is as near being about ghosts as makes no matter. Osbert Sitwell's ghost-story, "A Place of One's Own," is also promised. And now Spencer Tracy, of all rugged, honest people, turns up as a ghost in a story of the U.S.A.A.F. at the Empire, called "A GUY NAMED JOE."

No character in the film is actually named Joe. The hero, Mr. Tracy, is named Pete. The second hero, Van Johnson, is named Ted. The heroine, Irene Dunne, is named D'rinda, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that D'rinda's what she 's *called* by the dice players. Joe, it seems, is the generic name for any American pilot. U.S. General Chennault, we have been told, is the man who coined the title phrase. The General was addressing a group of young pilots. "When I'm in a cockpit," he said modestly, "I'm just a guy named Joe."

The film is a tricky flight into the realms of metaphysics, an exposition of the popular belief that the ghosts of dead pilots fly with living pilots to encourage and exhort them. The U.S.A.A.F. believe in their unseen Joes, it seems, just as implicitly as the R.A.F. believe in their Gremlins.

Spencer Tracy, as we have said, is a guy named Pete. At the beginning of the film he is very much alive, leading an American squadron from a British base, and "doing things with a 'plane the designer never thought of." His love, this D'rinda, is a ferry-pilot, presumably gifted with second sight. At any rate, as soon as she claps eyes on Pete's 'plane parked in a hangar in Scotland, she knows that his number is up. It is. He goes out to locate a German aircraft-carrier somewhere in the North Sea, bombs it, and is shot down. Whereupon, D'rinda, broken-hearted, gets a transfer to Australia, presumably to be on hand for the second half of the story, which is laid in New Guinea.

Pete, meanwhile, finds himself approaching some sort of celestial office building through a low bank of mist. There he is received by ghostly U.S. General Lionel Barrymore (in uniform, with a chestful of medals), who briefs him for his new job. He is to go back to earth, in fact, to Phœnix, Arizona, and take over the training of a raw recruit. Another ghost pilot, a guy named Dick, is assigned to go along with him.

Arrived at the flying-field, Dick (a mere supporting ghost) gets an ex-footballer to train, but Pete draws a millionaire. This millionaire, Ted, is something rather special, being, we are told, the Thoughtful

THE BEST PLAYS.

Starred by "The Sketch." ***=*highest value.*

*** "BLITHE SPIRIT" (*Duchess*). Noel Coward's play. Betty Ann Davies, Cecil Parker, Irene Browne, Beryl Measor.

*** "PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX" (*Duke of York's*). 1880 Brighton comedy. Iris Hoey, Dorothy Hyson, David Horne.

*** "UNCLE HARRY" (*Garrick*). Victorian gas-light murder thriller, with Michael Redgrave and Beatrix Lehmann.

** "THE DANCING YEARS" (*Adelphi*). Ivor Novello in his romantic musical play, with Muriel Barron and Roma Beaumont.

** "SOMETHING IN THE AIR" (*Palace*). Musical, with Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge.

** "ARC DE TRIOMPHE" (*Phœnix*). Ivor Novello's Paris cavalcade—1906-1925—with Mary Ellis, Raymond Lovell, Peter Graves, Elisabeth Welch.

** "PANAMA HATTIE" (*Piccadilly*). Musical comedy, with Bébé Daniels, Richard Hearne, Max Wall, Ivan Brandt, Claude Hulbert.

** "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE" (*Strand*). Witty, murderous farce. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Frank Pettingell, Edmund Willard.

** "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (*Globe*). Rattigan's inter-allied complications without tears. Jane Baxter, Ronald Squire, Hugh McDermott.

** "SWEETER AND LOWER" (*Ambassadors*). Second edition of "Sweet and Low" revue: Hermione Gingold and Henry Kendall.

** "JUNIOR MISS" (*Saville*). Comedy with the accent on youth. Joan White, Peggy Cummins.

** "THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT" (*Aldwych*). Wonderful acting by the Lunts in Robert Sherwood play.

** "THE LISBON STORY" (*Hippodrome*). Play with music.

* "A SOLDIER FOR CHRISTMAS" (*Vaudeville*). Light comedy: Joyce Barbour, Robert Beatty.

* "THE LILAC DOMINO" (*His Majesty's*). Revived, with Pat Taylor, Leo Franklyn, Bernard Clifton, Elizabeth French.

* "JILL DARLING" (*Winter Garden*). Musical comedy revived: Arthur Riscoe, Carole Lynne.

* "THE DRUID'S REST" (*St. Martin's Theatre*). Emlyn Williams's light comedy, with Gladys Henson, Michael Shepley.

* "AN IDEAL HUSBAND" (*Westminster*). Donat's ideal Wilde revival. Irene Vanbrugh, Martita Hunt, Esme Percy, Roland Culver.

* "MEET ME VICTORIA" (*Victoria Palace*). Cockney humour with Lupino Lane.

* "THIS WAS A WOMAN" (*Comedy*). Sonia Dresdel, John Bryning, Nova Pilbeam in effective melodrama.

* SADLER'S WELLS OPERA SEASON (*New*).

* "LOVE FOR LOVE" (*Haymarket*). Congreve comedy with John Gielgud, Yvonne Arnaud, Leslie Banks, Leon Quartermaine.

* "SIX PAIRS OF SHOES" (*Playhouse*). Harry Roy and band in a cabaret story.

* "TEN LITTLE NIGGERS" (*Cambridge*). Agatha Christie's thriller. Linden Travers, Allan Jeayes, Terence de Marney.

* "THE LOVE RACKET" (*Prince's*). High-speed musical with Arthur Askey and Carol Raye.

* "QUIET WEEK END" (*Wyndham's*). Sequel to "Quiet Wedding."

* "THE REST IS SILENCE" (*Prince of Wales*). Madeleine Smith murder reconstructed; with Ann Todd.

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. Consult your daily paper; ring up the theatre to avoid disappointment.

Type. While other pilots dance and flirt with girls, Ted sits in a corner, reading a book. Pete, however, quickly gets him out of these anti-social ways. He makes him the life and soul of the party. He turns him into "the luckiest flyer" in the Air Corps, and "pretty nearly the best." When the footballer and the thoughtful millionaire are ordered to New Guinea, Dick and Pete naturally tail along with them. And there they meet D'rinda, convalescent in a smart shirt-blouse, and ready to fall in love with Ted at the bat of an eyelid.

The last part of the film propounds the odd theory that Pete grows jealous of his young protégé, persuades him to take unnecessary risks, and is hauled up for reprimand before the Celestial Boss. A few grave words, however, about the responsibilities of a guardian pilot—something about the freedom of mankind rushing to meet the future with wings—sends him back to New Guinea in a mood of self-immolation. So when D'rinda, in her cute, impulsive way, steals Ted's bomber and goes off on her own to destroy a Japanese munition dump, Pete flies with her. They do the job. They blow up the dump. And then he takes her up, way up into the altitudes, where she can hear the Metro-Goldwyn Celestial Choir singing away like anything. I thought for a moment they were going up aloft together, but realised suddenly this was impossible, since there is no apparent accommodation for lady flyers in the heavenly hangars. No, Pete brings her safely down again to Ted and happiness, after which he presumably wings his own way back to the Otherwhere.

FRANCHOT TONE *and* VERONICA LAKE *(left and above) star in Paramount's "The Hour Before the Dawn" (Odeon, Leicester Square), from Somerset Maugham's latest best-seller, published in America. The story concerns an Austrian girl married into an influential English family. War is declared; she becomes a Nazi spy, causes the destruction of an English airfield. Her conscientious-objector husband, outraged at the affair, kills her at once and joins up in the R.A.F.*

Warner Brothers' "Destination Tokyo" (Warner Theatre; May 12) is a submarine story—the secret mission of the U.S.S. "Copperfin" to Tokyo Bay. Through the minefield she trails a damaged Jap cruiser right into the bay and broadcasts to the aircraft-carrier "Hornet" the information that enabled General Doolittle and his pilots to make every bomb count on their historic raid. The stars are Cary Grant and John Garfield.

"A Guy Named Joe" seems to me a brave try at a theme that is altogether too large for its producers. The idea is promising; the realisation needs a more delicate and imaginative touch than anyone here seems prepared to give it. Many of the earlier scenes are genial; and it 's always a pleasure to have Spencer Tracy about in a picture. But I can't help feeling that his talent deserves something better than a series of trips in the back seat of an aeroplane, or tagging along behind some chubby-faced juvenile as a guardian ghost.

"MELODY INN" (Plaza) is the sort of film that makes perfect strangers in cinemas want to murder each other. A and B, let us say, find themselves in the circle side by side. Both are good, peaceful, law-abiding citizens. Both pay their taxes regularly, and are probably excellent husbands and fathers. But after thirty minutes or so of "Melody Inn," they find themselves possessed of a mutual blood-lust difficult to curb. For A is happy, B is not. A, as W. S. Gilbert observed, is "Happy, Oh, so happy, Laughing ha-ha, Chaffing ha-ha, Nectar quaffing, ha-ha-ha." B, seated in frozen silence, is growing grimmer with every foot of film unspooled. A thinks "Melody Inn" is the cat's whiskers. B thinks "Melody Inn" is the pink limit. A would like to murder B for his glumness. B would gladly cut A's throat for his guffaws.

Whether you range yourself along with A or B depends largely on your taste for knockabout comedy.

Knockabout comedy is the thing that "Melody Inn" has practically nothing else but. The climax is a slapstick wagon race, in which the stars, Dorothy Lamour, Dick Powell and Victor Moore, tear along through the Arizona desert in and on and about a "chuck-wagon" practically sawn in half. There is also an acrobatic band, famed for performing "one of the rowdiest musical acts in show business." The band makes a speciality of breaking musical instruments, chairs and music-stands over each other's heads, and is assisted in the good work by a vaudeville actor named Gil Lamb, who concludes the show by crashing through a grand piano.

Another artist out to make you laugh loud is Comedienne Cass Dailey. Miss Dailey is the vigorous comic who added so much to the craziness of "Crazy House." She has assertive teeth, behind which she makes strange, imprisoned noises. She is wiry and athletic, and seems constantly surprised at her own activities. She sings, not in the wooing way Miss Lamour sings, but vehemently and rather angrily. In the present film she enacts a two-gun cow-girl, to whose rancho roadhouse the sheriff (Mr. Lamb) chases a burlesque queen (Miss Lamour), a mining engineer (Mr. Powell), and a counterfeiter (Mr. Moore). The resultant goings-on are all in Technicolor, and Mr. Moore, a great comedian when he gets the chance, is sometimes very, very funny. Well, it 's up to you now, folks. Which type are you? A or B?

20th Century-Fox film "Four Jills in a Jeep" (Tivoli) is the film version of the adventures of KAY FRANCIS, MITZI MAYFAIR, MARTHA RAYE, *and* CAROLE LANDIS *(our "Pin-up Girl" of this week) when they toured the American Army camps in England and the battle zones in North Africa, from October 1942 to March 1943. Following Jimmy Dorsey and his orchestra by bomber, they cross the Atlantic to England, and on to Algiers, with romance in the offing. Guest Stars are Alice Faye, Betty Grable, Carmen Miranda and George Jessel.*

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

MRS. WALSH, for going to "the dogs" completely and successfully, all by herself.

A colossal amount of hard work went to the compiling of the 2000 files which give full details of the dogs, each of which has its own card recording description, times and racing record.

FOR two years MRS. IVY WALSH has had the sole running of a dog-racing track bought by her husband in Staines. Not only is she secretary, clerk of the files, and checker, but judge, time-keeper and announcer of results. Early in 1942 Jack Walsh, her husband, who was waiting to be called up by the R.A.F., decided to gamble by buying the Staines track, which was then in the market. It was thought that the Government would close down dog-racing, but he thought otherwise, took the risk, and bought the whole thing as a going concern. Two months later he was in the Royal Air Force—he is now a Pilot Officer—and his wife was left to run the entire business on her own. An hour before the first race, Mrs. Walsh steps out of a small car, ducks under the guide-wires,

[*Continued on right.*

She checks an entry by means of a marking-card which gives details of each dog's distinctive markings and measurements, thus preventing fraud.

In addition to judging and timing, Mrs. Walsh makes the announcements over the loudspeaker system.

Continued.]

and carefully inspects the state of the going on the Staines greyhound track. A few minutes later, still the only person to be seen in the place, she unpacks a series of steel filing-trays from the back of the car, unlocks the office door, reads the mail, chalks up a notice, sets out the files, opens the club-house and inspects the mechanical hare. Then, helped by her one full-time assistant, she prepares the paddock and has 48 kennels ready for the dogs to arrive. For the next half-hour Mrs. Walsh is even busier. With a cousin and a friend who give her a hand on race days, she meets the owners, takes the entrance money, allots a kennel to each dog. Since 1942, Mrs. Walsh has judged over 800 races and some hundreds of private trials, besides grading something like 2000 racing greyhounds.

A draw for the traps is made by members of the public themselves at the Staines meetings. While a cousin and a friend help with the drum from which the draw is made, Mrs. Walsh notes down the details as they are called out.

Measurements are taken of a greyhound which is to run in a Thursday morning trial. Mrs. Walsh expertly runs the rule over the dog and his trainer stands by to soothe him if he proves camera-shy.

OUR HOME AIR DEFENCE CHIEF IN HIS HOME.

LADY HILL, *wife of the A.O.C. Air Defences of Great Britain, in the garden with her chow, Choppy.*

A room with a view in North London: LADY HILL *arranging books in a light, airy study.*

AIR MARSHAL SIR RODERIC HILL, C.B., M.C., A.F.C., was recently appointed Air Officer Commanding the new command, Air Defences of Great Britain, which assumes entire responsibility for the air defence of these islands both by day and by night. He is a well-known pilot, who had a distinguished record in the last war and was in charge of Experimental Flying Department, Royal Aircraft Establishment, from 1917-23, and received the A.F.C. and bar for experimental flying. He has held many important R.A.F. posts, including that of Commandant of the R.A.F. Staff College, 1942-43. Lady Hill is a daughter of the late Lieut.-Col. E. R. Morton, was married in 1917, and has a son and two daughters. She and Sir Roderic have a charming house in North London.

A keen musician, LADY HILL *never neglects to put in some time practising her violin every day.*

The A.O.C. Air Defences of Great Britain, AIR MARSHAL SIR RODERIC HILL, *with* LADY HILL *and their chow.*

MR. MIDDLETON OFF THE AIR AND ON THE PLOT:

Pausing to admire the hyacinth border: MR. MIDDLETON *starts off with his barrow and tools.*

The expert completely concentrated on his important task of pruning fruit-trees.

A piece of work requiring great skill and care: Mr. Middleton grafting fruit-trees.

Handling the fork with vigour: Mr. Middleton digging up ground on a Surrey nursery.

EVERY amateur gardener and hopeful allotment-holder listens t[o] tries to follow his advice and admonitions. Here we are al[so] in this case a Surrey nursery garden—giving a practical demonstrat[ion] a strawberry bed, and carrying out the delicate operation of graft[ing] that even such a practical gardener as Mr. Middleton finds time heaven

***N.B.* A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.**

THE B.B.C. GARDENER GIVES A PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION.

Examining with satisfaction the superb display of blooms on a magnolia-tree.

Working on the strawberry beds: MR. MIDDLETON *active with his hoe.*

The right way to sow seeds, properly spaced in a little trench.

A close-up of Mr. Middleton with his pruning-knife, attending to a fruit-tree.

MR. MIDDLETON'S Gardening talks on the radio, and faithfully
... to present Mr. Middleton off the air, but actually on the plot—
...tion of how to do it. He is shown digging, pruning fruit-trees, hoeing
...fting fruit-trees, as well as sowing seeds, but it is nice also to record
...e to pause and admire the beauty of the flowers, and to enjoy their
...nly scent!

THE SCARF HAT-TRICK.

Afternoon turban elegance achieved by nimble fingers and a scarf.

WOMEN'S hats may be unrationed, but war conditions have made purses shrink and prices soar! No wonder that the girl with nimble fingers and a stock of scarves is admired and envied, for she can achieve elegance and variety at the minimum cost. These photographs illustrate a scarf hat-trick—three models knotted up from a couple of woollen scarves and two silk ones. The scarves are undamaged, and can revert to their original use whenever required.

Side view of the afternoon turban, tied with a long end hanging down at one side.

To make a tailor-made turban, tie the scarf round the head, tuck first the left end into the crown . . .

. . . then put the right end in across, and drape it softly and becomingly . . .

. . . and you will have produced this smart turban which will suit your neat coat and skirt to a T.

Two narrow silk scarves make an evening turban. Tie the first round the head and pin. Make a loop with one end, twist the other and pin firmly.

Make several folds in the second silk scarf, hold together with a pin and put it on top of the head behind the other loop, and pin.

The result is this gay and amusing silk head-dress, guaranteed to supply "panache" for an evening party.

MADELEINE SMITH OF "THE REST IS SILENCE"—ANN TODD.

Right: Madeleine specially arranged to have a basement bedroom at her home in Glasgow. Here she waits to let in her lover, Emile l'Angelier (Karel Stepanek).

At Mrs. Gorton's Finishing School, Clapton, 1853, the schoolgirl Madeleine Smith (ANN TODD), *finding a subtle pleasure in duplicity, started her career by getting access to papers in the headmistress's room, and cheating in the examination.*

In 1857 Madeleine Smith stood in the dock at the High Court of Justiciary, Edinburgh, on trial for the murder of her lover, l'Angelier, who died from arsenical poisoning.

ADAPTED from the evidence, "The Rest is Silence" at the Prince of Wales's theatre stages the famous sensational trial for murder of Madeleine Smith, the beautiful Scottish girl who charged at Edinburgh in 1857 with the murder of her discarded lover, was released on a "Not Proven" verdict. Ann Todd looks lovely, and is beautifully dressed in the part of Madeleine. Nicholas Hannen plays Mr. Smith, her father, and there is a huge cast besides.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BERTRAM PARK.

Madeleine was ready to go to a party in this beautiful black dress when the police came to arrest her for murder.

ALL IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK:

MRS. JANE TODHUNTER (*right*) *was elected* "*Miss Munitions 1944*" *at a North-West of England factory.* ANDRÉE, *of* "*Gaston and Andrée,*" *who acted as judges, is congratulating her.*

MAJOR FLORENCE CATHERINE JEPSON, W.A.C., *has been appointed Assistant Military Attaché in London. She is the first W.A.C. to hold such a post.*

LADY BRIDGET ELLIOT, *elder daughter of the Earl and Countess of Minto, married* LIEUT.-COLONEL J. A. CLARK, JNR., U.S.A.A.F., *elder son of Mr. J. A. Clark, of Westbury, Long Island, at St. James's, Spanish Place.*

Right:
The marriage of MISS PAMELA BLAKE, *only daughter of Sir Edward and Lady Blake, of Tillmouth Park, Cornhill, Northumberland, to* LIEUT. RICHARD HOSKING *took place recently at Cornhill-on-Tweed.*

SIR FRANCIS WINNINGTON, *Bart., Welsh Guards, married* MISS ANNE DRURY-LOWE, *only daughter of the late Captain Lawrence Drury-Lowe, Scots Guards, at the Royal Military Chapel, Wellington Barracks.*

MISS INGA ANDERSEN *brought a bunch of bananas back from her E.N.S.A. concert tour in Italy, and took them round a children's hospital in London, but this little patient had never seen one before and didn't fancy it!*

SUBALTERN MARY CHURCHILL, A.T.S., *christened both the U.S. Bomber* "*Stage Door Canteen*" *AND the C.O.,* COLONEL HARRY LEBER, *with the bottle of Coco-cola provided for the purpose! She is wiping down his uniform, amid laughter.*

A SELECTION OF TOPICAL SNAPS.

LIEUT.-GENERAL CARL A. SPAATZ, *O.C., U.S. Strategic Air Force, attended the marriage of his driver,* SERGEANT THOMAS ISABEL, *of Earle, Arkansas, to* SERGEANT JOYCE MILLICENT KELLEY, W.A.A.F. *at Holy Trinity, Tulse Hill.*

LIEUT. PAUL BONIFAS *is opening a season with his " Théâtre Molière " at the Arts Theatre. Most of the members of his company escaped from France when she fell; and he plans to take them back to the first liberated zone.*

M. UNAYDIN, *the new Turkish Ambassador, has arrived in London with* MADAME UNAYDIN. *Before leaving Ankara he stated that he was " proud and glad to have been chosen to represent Turkey in a friendly and allied country like Britain."*

LADY CAMILLA WALLOP, *daughter of the Earl of Portsmouth and of Mrs. John How, married* LORD RUPERT NEVILL, *the Life Guards, younger son of the Marquess and Marchioness of Abergavenny, at St. George's, Hanover Square.*

Left:
The engagement of MISS PATRICIA PRIEST, *a young English girl, to H.E. The Egyptian Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, Dr. Hassan Nachat Pasha, has been announced.*

The marriage of PRINCESS NATASHA BAGRATION, *only daughter of the late Prince Constantine Bagration of Mukhrani and of H.H. Princess Tatiana of Russia, to* MR. CHARLES HEPBURN JOHNSTON, *Second Secretary, H.M. Embassy, Cairo, took place recently.*

This W.R.N.S. OFFICER *is boarding a merchant ship which has arrived from convoy at a Naval port. The girls are specially selected and trained for this work. Their duties may take them some miles out to sea in drifters or launches.*

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"PLANET AND GLOW-WORM," Miss Edith Sitwell's new anthology, is described as "a book for the sleepless," for those "whose continual cares, fears, sorrows, dry brains" drive rest away. "The greatest of all works of literature in a certain kind," Miss Sitwell says, "bring comfort to the heart, but they do not bring sleep . . . they awaken the heart and the soul to what lies beyond grief." This is a memorable definition of the function of great art. Miss Sitwell goes on to say that prayers, too, are "awakening," so no prayers are included here, except this general petition: "May all that lives be free from pain."

The pieces she has chosen, then, tend to evoke moods and states of mind rather than to uncover meanings. What kind of thoughts are most likely to promote sleep? Certainly not thoughts about ourselves. But the thoughts of other men are not necessarily vexatious. To be sleep-inducing they need not be about sleep, and comparatively few of Miss Sitwell's extracts are. In this she shows herself a sound psychologist, for too much brooding on sleep is likely to keep it away. Her extracts get their soporific virtue by other means—by sound and rhythm, by remoteness from daily life, by conjuring up flowers and peaceful landscapes, by excluding such agitating emotions as hope, fear and anxiety, by dwelling on certainties (even sad ones) rather than uncertainties. And also by their freshness and unfamiliarity. A change of position may help one to sleep: these extracts change the position of the mind, and refresh it.

Pleasant Thoughts.

"Think of something pleasant" is an old prescription against sleeplessness. Think, for instance, of the lovely names of Italian cities which Sir Osbert Sitwell has woven into a beguiling fantasy, or the no less lovely names of the women of the ancient world. As objects of contemplation, a word, a fact or an image offer more emotional security than a thought: the concrete is more restful than the abstract. Miss Sitwell's book is rich in facts—curious facts that would not always be recognised as such by scientists, poets' facts, facts from travellers' tales, portents and marvels. "A bull that is tied to a fig-tree becomes gentle of a sudden," we are told; and another extract informs us that

God in the whizzing of a pleasant wind
Shall march upon the tops of mulberry-trees.

But if one's object is to be taken out of oneself, this object is not always best secured by thinking of something pleasant. The contemplation of other people's sorrows often mitigates one's own: "Discourse to me some dismal tragedy," said Webster's Duchess, seeking consolation. Miss Sitwell has provided for this need of the spirit with sad, regretful lyrics and extracts out of plays.

A "dry brain" needs irrigation and the images Miss Sitwell chooses fall on it like dew. But her mind, though far from being a dry mind, does not move in a watery climate, it is radiant with light: not, in this book, so much the light of the sun as of lesser luminaries that give no heat; planetary light, lunar light, light from the glow-worm, light for the mind to see an image by before oblivion enfolds it. A lovely book, wakeful enough to be conscious of this world, but full of intimations of the Golden Age that sometimes comes with sleep.

A Crucible.

Mr. Mallalieu assembles a number of men from many walks of life and puts them through a period of training for the Navy. This initiation over, they are posted to the destroyer "Marsden" and take part—an extremely active part—in escorting a convoy to Russia. "Very Ordinary Seaman" has, therefore, somewhat the same subject as Mr. C. S. Forester's "The Ship"; and in some degree the two books have the like intention—to show how the individual lives of men may be merged in a common effort. But the method employed is different in each case: Mr. Forester gives us a gallery of portraits, carefully framed and separated from each other, whereas Mr. Mallalieu from the start throws his men into a crucible and gradually welds them together.

To Swear or Not to Swear.

His method of presentation is even more realistic than Mr. Forester's. As far as convention admits, he reproduces the exact idiom of the men's speech. This includes substitutes for words which are often heard but seldom written; and they occur no less frequently—possibly even more frequently—than they would in ordinary life. Automatic bad language, if neither picturesque nor funny, is, as most people who do not use it would agree, very boring to listen to. Instead of adding something to language, and making it more emphatic, it has the opposite effect: it weakens and detracts, and after a time begins to have an ugly life of its own which, like a parasite, preys on the meaning of what is being said. Undoubtedly an effect of realism is obtained which could not be obtained any other way, except by printing the words themselves; but is that effect worth it, at the expense of so much monotony? To attempt to decide this, however, would be to raise the whole question of realism in art. Some might think it would be enough to say, "On that day the swear-box netted two pounds ten," and leave the reader to distribute, according to his fancy, the words occasioning the fines.

But setting aside the artistic aspect of the question, there is no doubt that mechanical, unimaginative bad language is a great leveller. Talking alike makes men seem alike. Mr. Mallalieu introduces a great number of characters, and though by no means all of them swear, those who do are enough to handicap the author's already heavy task of characterisation. On the other hand, no one (except perhaps Cromwell?) has ever suggested that men fight better for being clean-mouthed. The crew of the "Marsden" were there to fight; and they fight magnificently and die heroically. The *Luftwaffe's* continuous attacks on the convoy are as vividly described as anyone could wish; and the feeling of peace and comradeship which descends on the crew when the last action is over, the burying of hatchets and the sense of solidarity, is touching and memorable.

Mr. Peter Cheyney.

Mr. Peter Cheyney writes a kind of novel that is neither detective story, thriller, nor shocker. It has some of the elements of all three, subdued to the requirements of a special kind of sophistication the secret of which is his own. That sophistication is perhaps transatlantic in origin, as are many of the phrases, in especial the insults and endearments, used by the characters. For instance: "I got a brand of comfort talk that would grow hair on an orange," and "so I sorta gathered her up and started givin' her a line that woulda made Casanova look like a cold frankfurter in a snow drift." This is Mr. Nikolls, Slim Callaghan's assistant. Slim himself is more direct and less picturesque: his manner of address is suave, but often there is an undertone of menace to it, even when he is addressing the lovely ladies who "seldom say yes and never say when." There are three of them in this story, none of them good in the strict sense of the word, but one much better than the others. They are all conscious of Slim's attraction, at least as conscious as he is of theirs; and he uses his power, some might think a little unscrupulously, in the task of establishing their innocence or guilt. Slim is a bluffer: he knows what happened when the Denys Coronet was stolen, but he can only prove his knowledge by surprising or frightening the parties concerned into telling the truth. The police are suspicious of him, and it seems with good reason, for his behaviour is unaccountable and his manner extremely arrogant. But they are grateful to him in the end.

Distinguishing Marks.

What distinguishes Mr. Cheyney's stories from others of their genre, English or American, is the special kind of polish he applies. Understatement and an extremely light touch are two of the ingredients; he never has to rub hard for the surface to shine and sparkle. Just a word, and the beauty, sincerity or frailty of this or that lady is established beyond cavil. His is a narrow convention, so narrow that it only admits with difficulty the special circumstances of wartime. Why are these ladies not driving tractors? we may ask. Why are these men not serving in his Majesty's Forces? It is a measure of the imaginative strength of Mr. Cheyney's convention that such inquiries fade away as soon as they are formulated.

Setting and Atmosphere.

In "The Weight of the Evidence" Mr. Michael Innes, contrary to his wont, confines us in a prosaic setting—a university in an English manufacturing town. But he is no friend to the commonplace and contrives to invest the city and university of Nesfield with the sinister, the rarefied, though not necessarily purified, atmosphere that is peculiarly his own. When Inspector Hobhouse and Mr. Appleby, of the C.I.D., approach Nesfield Court in the darkness, and make their unconventional entrance, a shot whistling past seems rather more surprising than would an attack from one of the marble nymphs or boars.

Mr. Appleby relies mainly on his own powers of observation and deduction—like the spider, he spins his web from within.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Planet and Glow-worm Compiled by Edith Sitwell. (*Macmillan; 6s.*)
Very Ordinary Seaman. By J. P. W. Mallalieu. (*Gollancz; 9s. 6d.*)
They Never Say When. By Peter Cheyney. (*Collins; 8s. 6d.*)
The Weight of the Evidence. By Michael Innes. (*Gollancz; 8s. 6d.*)

THE LONDON GALLERIES.

174th Annual Exhibition of the Royal Academy. *Burlington House, Piccadilly, W.1.*

Water-colours by the late Walter Taylor; memorial show of works by the late Morland Lewis; new paintings by Cedric Morris. *Leicester Galleries, Leicester Square.* Till May 10.

Modern paintings, including J. D. Innes, Derwent Lees, Matthew Smith, etc. *Leger Gallery, 13, Old Bond Street.* April—May.

Paintings by Official War Artists. Canadian War Paintings. *National Gallery, Trafalgar Square.*

Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours Annual Exhibition. *26, Conduit Street, W.1.* Till May 31.

DEBRETT'S PEERAGE.

Debrett 1944 is on sale, and shows no sign of war attrition. This famous work of reference is more ample than ever, as it includes a War Honours Supplement list of V.C.s and George Cross holders. Nor has the price soared above the pre-war 105s. net. Mr. Hankinson, the editor, has completely revised the entire book, which has a double pagination of over 3000 closely printed pages. In his Preface, he reviews world events as they affect his province, touching on the heavy toll of the war, new honours and so forth.

Pin-up Girl:
No. 3. Carole Landis.

CAROLE LANDIS *stars in Twentieth Century-Fox's real-life war adventure, " Four Jills in a Jeep," due at the Tivoli on April 30. It records the tour made in 1942-43 by Kay Francis, Carole Landis, Martha Raye and Mitzi Mayfair to entertain the troops in American Army camps in England and in North African battle zones. During this tour Carole Landis met Captain Tom Wallace, American Eagle Squadron pilot, and married him. Their romance is introduced into the film.*

VICTORIAN ROMANCE FILMED.

Lord Manderstoke (JAMES MASON; *centre*), *flung out of Hopwood's Shades by Hopwood* (JOHN LAURIE; *left*) *and Chunks* (WILFRED LAWSON). *His lady friend* (VIRGINIA KEILEY) *goes too.*

The vicious and unscrupulous Lord Manderstoke, furious at being ejected from the night-haunt Hopwood's Shades, attacks Hopwood with murderous violence. His woman friend watches, appalled.

Alicia Seymour (MARGARETTA SCOTT) *takes Fanny as personal maid, unaware that she is Seymour's daughter. She has just congratulated Fanny on her skill in hairdressing.*

Harry Somerford (STEWART GRANGER), *secretary to Seymour, finds Fanny sketching by the lake in the grounds of his employer's house, and is fascinated by her grace and beauty.*

"Is there anywhere we can speak?" *Kate Somerford* (CATHLEEN NESBITT), *sister to Harry, comes to the Jolly Bargee, Islington pub., to tell her brother's sweetheart, Fanny, that she must go out of his life.*

"I thought you had a party at home": young Harry Somerford (STEWART GRANGER) *forsakes his family at Christmas in favour of Fanny, at the Islington pub.*

"FANNY BY GASLIGHT," the picture version of Michael Sadleir's romantic period novel, is due for production at the Gaumont, Haymarket, and at the Marble Arch Pavilion on Monday, May 8. The Gaumont *première* at 6.30 p.m. on May 8 will be in aid of the Civil Defence Welfare Fund, instituted

"FANNY BY GASLIGHT."

Fanny (PHYLLIS CALVERT), *foster-child of Hopwood and Mrs. Hopwood, sees her adopted father die under the hooves of a cab-horse on the cobblestones, after a fight with Manderstoke.*

" I could never marry anyone without telling them the truth " : Fanny tells her father, Clive Seymour, that she does not wish to hide the secret of her illegitimate birth.

The frightening prelude to a duel with the wicked Lord Manderstoke : Fanny, in Paris with her lover, Harry, wakes early one morning to find him writing his will before meeting the challenge.

in 1940 by the Home Secretary, and now considerably depleted by the calls which have been made on it. It is hoped to raise £5000 from the " Fanny by Gaslight " Gaumont *première*, arranged by the kindness of Mr. J. Arthur Rank and Mr. Mark Ostrer.

" I don't want to be dependent on anyone " : Fanny has been told by Clive Seymour (STUART LINDSELL) *that she is his natural daughter. He offers her a job under his housekeeper* (AMY VENESS), *but Fanny is uncertain.*

" There is something in this letter my father wanted you to hear " : Fanny reveals to Harry that the late Clive Seymour was her father, and not her lover, as Harry had supposed.

" On my command you will start to move " : the Directeur du Combat (GUY GYMAS ; *background) superintends the grisly ceremonial of the pistol duel between Harry Somerford (left) and Lord Manderstoke.*

SLIGHT ACTIVITY OVER EAST ANGLIA.*

By N. G. STRONG.

"IS that the Cuckoo?" asked my wife, trying to listen and looking as if she were going to turn the wireless off.

"Can't be," I said; "the nine o'clock news has only just started. It's never as early as this."

We are not, as the reader may immediately suppose, a couple of surrealist ornithologists. The cuckoo in question roosts on a tower on top of the local police-station and gives us a "crash" warning in the case of an unexpected air raid. It is really an ordinary siren, but the Powers have performed some slight operation on its larynx, so that it is now capable of emitting a noise which, to the official ear at any rate, resembles the song of the cuckoo. Unfortunately, it "oos" first and "cucks" afterwards, but no one has liked to point this out to the Powers, as they seem to think very highly of it. In any case, it only sounds in moments of "Imminent Danger" (delightful phrase!), an ordinary air raid being signified in the usual manner (a series of short bangs, followed by an Alert).

"Well, I can hear a Jerry overhead," retorted my wife, striving to make her voice louder than Frederick Grisewood's.

"Oh, our stuff's been going out for some time now," I mumbled knowingly. I belong to the "It-must-be-one-of-ours" school of escapism. My wife, however, favours the opposite "I-like-to-know-what's-happening" philosophy of realism.

"I'm going to switch-off," she said, reaching out to the set before I could protest. The ensuing silence was broken only by the last dying growl of the siren.

"There you are!" she said triumphantly.

"Tail-end of the All Clear," I muttered testily. "Warning must have gone long ago. You know we don't always hear it. There's been some rather bangy music on. So you can switch on."

She switched. Silence.

"See," she said. "Local station's closed down. That's a sure sign."

Temporarily disconcerted, I yet retained sufficient presence of mind to give our rather seasoned set a carefully-timed tap in the gizzard. Frederick Grisewood was with us once more.

I suppose I may have indulged in just a bit of an escapist smirk at this stage, but I still think it was unnecessary for my wife to drop her book on the floor quite so suddenly. Naturally my nerves were ruffled, and her grinning "Only one of ours," as I sat down again, did nothing to soothe them. Determined not to be caught again, I concentrated on some rather forceful dance music which the wireless was now playing. Nothing happened for half-an-hour, so I felt emboldened to remark, "Well, if that was the 'crash' warning you heard, the imminent danger's taking a long time to materialise." Another loud bang greeted these words, but, once bit, I contrived to exert my iron self-control and calmly continued reading. Or would have done, but my wife landed heavily in my lap, with her arms round my neck.

"Oo, a bomb!" she squealed, rather delightedly.

I considered. True, the window had rattled and the cupboard door had swung open. Another flake of plaster had fallen from the ceiling, and the cat was under the table, spitting. On the other hand, our somewhat temperamental clock was still ticking happily, and the black-out of the side-window hadn't fallen down. Only a little soot spattered the hearth, and the *diminuendo* hum from the piano died away almost at once.

So, "Only gunfire," I smiled reassuringly.

But what a dehydrated essence of experience went into those two words. For we coastal dwellers have many things to take into account in an affair of this sort. For you inland lubbers it is merely a straight issue between bombs and gunfire, or one-of-ours and here-he-comes. (For I take it that no one, with the possible exception of certain hill-side dwellers, is any longer deceived by the sound of a passing car.) But which of you, at the first interrogative lift of the wifely eyebrow, could have made that official pronouncement with the calm assurance that the disturbance was not, in fact, due to an offshore mine being swept, a torpedo finding its mark a few miles out to sea, the coastal battery putting in some practice or the Home Guard doing hand-grenade exercise on the beach? And who, on first hearing what is patently the entire Luftwaffe approaching, could merely wonder, with a temporary lapse from patriotism, why our M.T.B. flotilla has to put to sea during the Brains Trust?

Actually, the coastal-battery bang is distinguishable only by the time at which it occurs—about midday on Sunday, at the precise moment when my wife is removing from the oven a precariously-balanced monument of hot plates, dishes and vegetables, surmounted by what—owing really to our inability to coin a suitable word—we still facetiously refer to as "the joint." They say that on one occasion an air raid which chanced to take place during battery practice was entirely overlooked.

The hand-grenade exercise, too, is not easy to recognise, apart from its context (a certain amount of coming and going, accompanied by confused shouts).

And the mine-torpedo question I personally can only really solve when stretched out peacefully in a hot bath. But as this is when it usually seems to arise, I am fairly expert. If it is a torpedo-bang, the surface of the water is covered with an interesting pattern of criss-cross ripples (due to the Doppler effect, I believe), and my towel slips silently off the rail into a pool of water. A mine-bang, after the first lateral lurch, produces a short chop on the water, subsiding to a gentle swell. Also the sponge submerges. I have never evolved a satisfactory explanation of this, partly because I do the same thing myself. But one good point about this experiment is that, since it requires more than the regulation five inches of water, I can at least have an adequate bath with a clear conscience.

All this distilled experience, then, passed through my mind; though I must admit that on this occasion my snap decision was based largely on the reactions of the cat, which had refrained from scrambling up the curtains. No more bangs followed, though, which seemed to prove the cat wrong, so I strolled out into the night to see for myself. I was just in time to hear about the last quarter of the cuckoo warning, but my wife averred it was the cuckoo clear. This is given by a series of "oos" at equal intervals, which intervals, however, are filled by the "oos" from a more distant, and asynchronous, siren; the resulting sound, to my mind, more closely resembling the song of the cuckoo than the warning itself, and, indeed, than many cuckoos I have heard.

Just then a loud roaring sound passed close over the roof. I took it to be a night fighter coming in. My wife said it was going out. The sound diminished and faded to a drone, but still persisted. I listened. "There you are, it's waiting to land." She looked dubious, but couldn't quite think of an answer. I was just trying to find a nice way of saying, "Told you so," when the drone suddenly changed gear and materialised into a fire tender, which dashed past the house.

"Going home," I said quickly.

"Going to a fire," she countered.

Then the drone became louder again, the searchlights flickered on, and steadied on something silver coming in from seawards. Two coloured lights floated down from the plane.

"Flares," said my wife; "it's a Jerry."

"Recognition signals," said I; "one of ours."

Then the searchlights went out to prove me right; but before I could voice my triumph a burst of machine-gun fire broke out.

"Night fighter on his tail," said my wife.

"Er—something out at sea," was all I could think of.

We waited. A solitary searchlight beam flashed out again, and we caught sight of a silver gleam at its tip.

"'Nother Jerry," she said, too quickly this time; for as the beam moved slightly, the silver gleam blossomed into a barrage balloon.

"Ha! Lighting 'em up for our fellows coming back. They often do that," I explained.

"Huh! Getting cold. Think I'll go in." She was unaccountably terse. No further inference could be drawn from the wanderings of the searchlights, which we have always found to be unreliable indicators, so I followed her and we listened to the wireless again. The rest of the evening passed quietly, except for a sudden whistling noise which, as I realised in time to convert my dive under the table into a just-tying-my-shoelace movement, was issuing from the loudspeaker.

When bedtime came we switched off the set and heard, for the second time that night, the last fading note of the siren. As usual I just managed to announce that it must be the All Clear before the inevitable loud bang. But I had been doing some thinking and was prepared for it. I met Milady's scornful look with an airy glance:

"Only firing the guns off. George was telling me that's the only thing to do once they've loaded them. They can't be unloaded again. Something to do with the fuses, or something."

"Or something," she rejoined. "Sounded more like a bomb to me."

But I stuck to my guns. (Ha, ha!) "No aeroplanes about. Bombs don't fall out of an empty sky."

Once more I was nearly fooled, but the drone turned out to be the fire-tender returning. I opened my mouth to speak, but stopped suddenly.

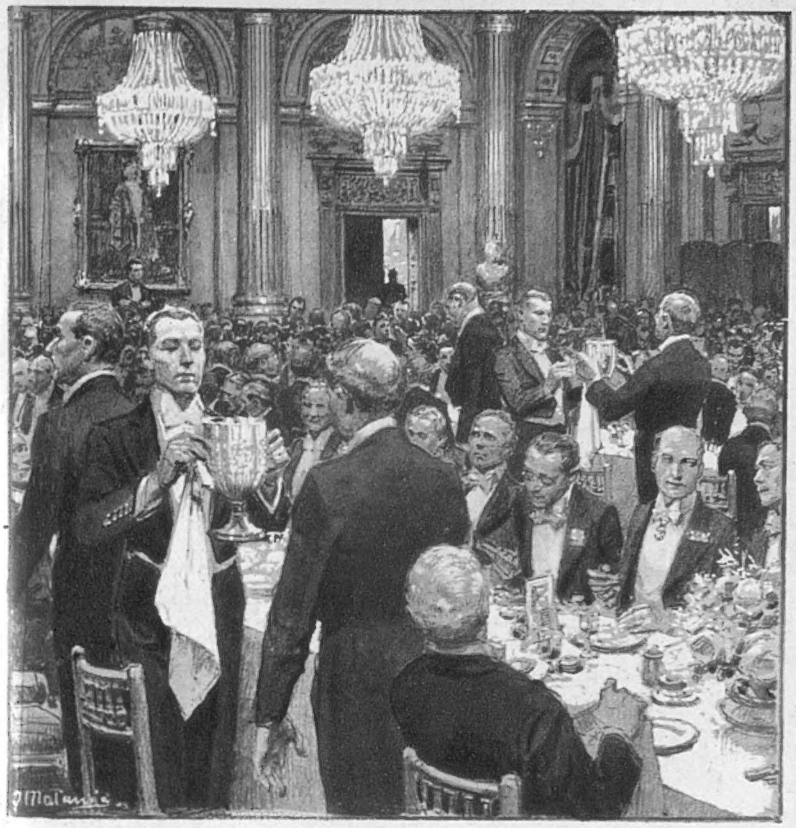
"Going home—the other way, I suppose?" For the first time I realised the true meaning of "dulcet tones." Moreover, as I pointed out, midnight was no time to carry a useless discussion any further. So we decided, as usual, that we could read all about it in the morning paper.

But I wish the fellow who writes the "Slight enemy activity over East Anglia" communiqué would realise that this only leads to another domestic argument as to whether we are just in East Anglia, or just in the Home Counties.

So we still don't know whether we had an air raid last night or not.

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*



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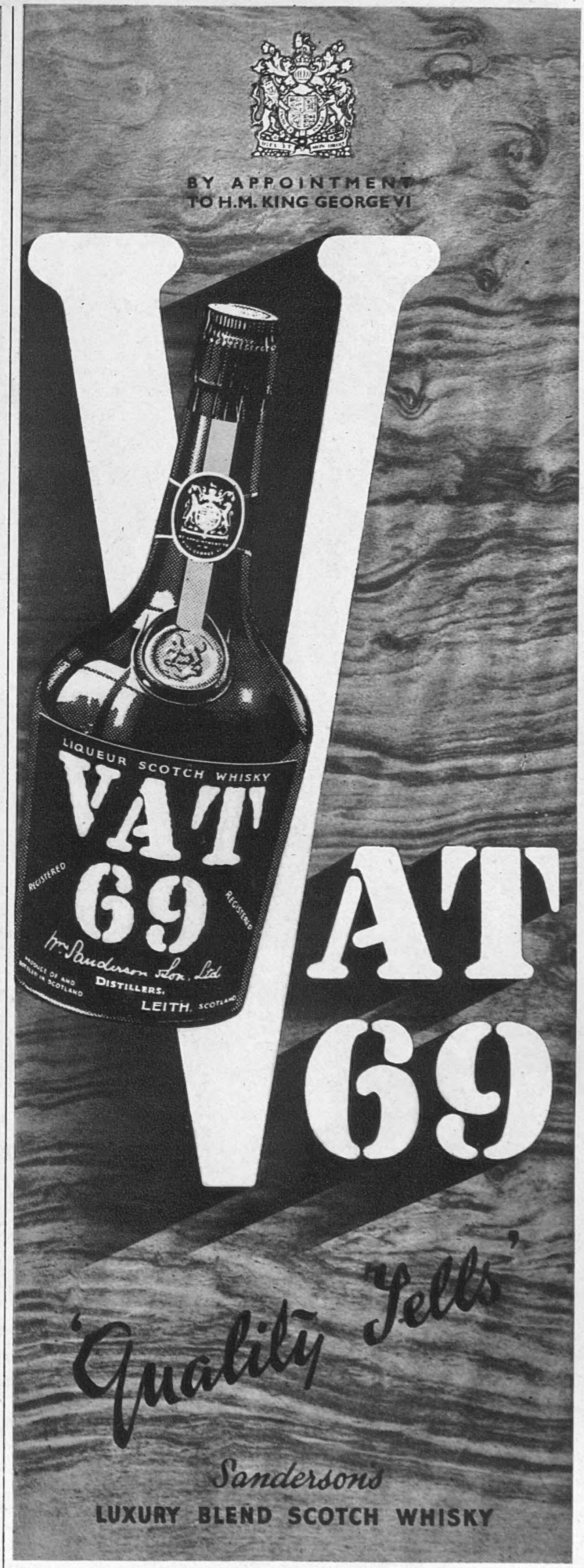

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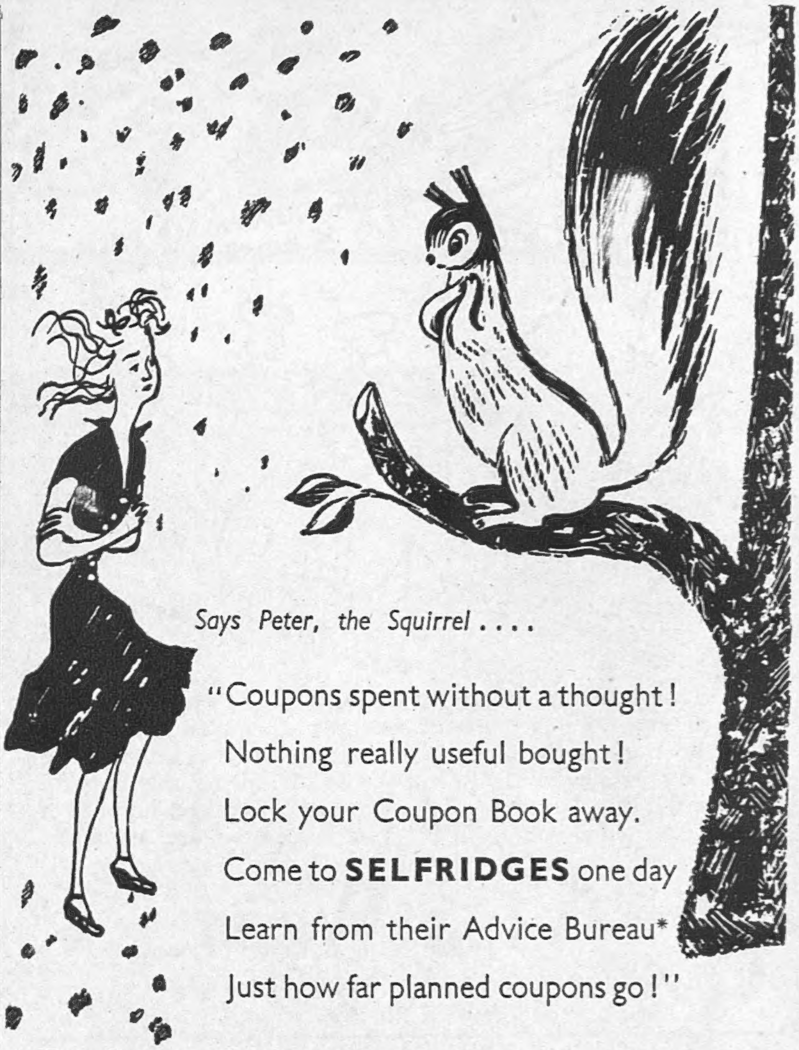

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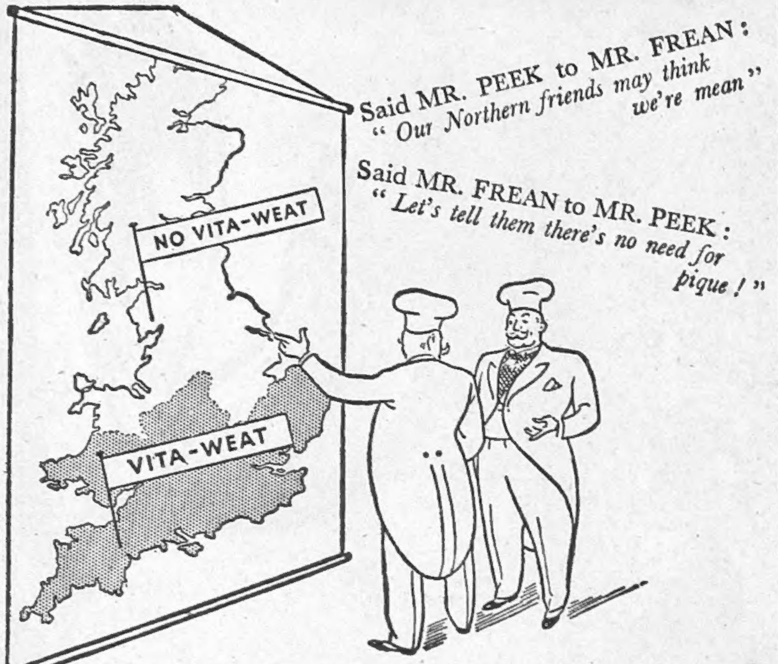

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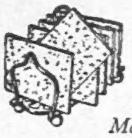

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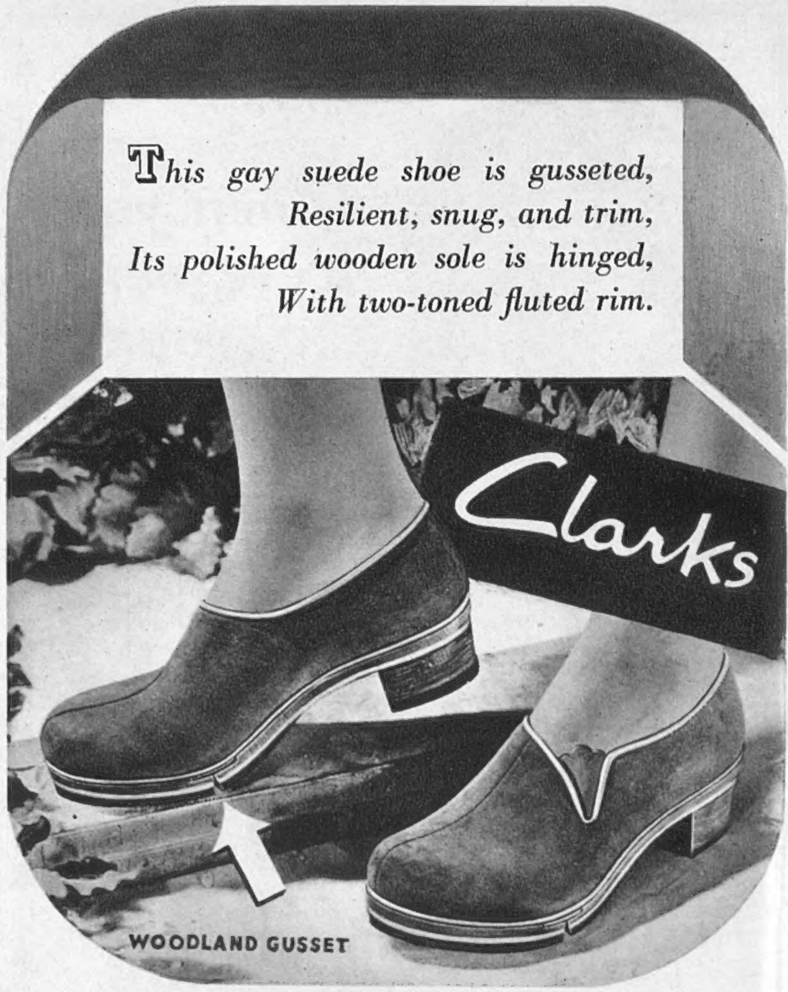

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